

with considerable care, but the entrance of the single seed through surface soil was not impossible. At the same time six samples of sandy soil were taken, three from the surface and three from two feet or more below. They were exposed in earthen pots, covered with panes of glass, and kept moist. The samples from the surface became covered with the grasses and weeds of the locality, and those from deeper developed nothing.

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Mr. Pringle in Mexico.

All who read the GAZETTE will be glad to learn of the safe return to his Vermont home of Mr. C. G. Pringle. He has had a "hard struggle this year in North Mexico with drought and other adverse circumstances," being able to collect to advantage for only two autumn months. His field of operations was in the highlands of West Chihuahua, and, in spite of the "adverse circumstances" under which he labored, he has secured his usual quota of treasures, every specimen of which bears the stamp of the collector.

In regard to the grasses I wish to say that, considering the large number of species collected in Mexico in recent years, both by Mr. Pringle and Dr. Palmer, the number of apparently new species or forms is surprisingly large. Of the forty-five sheets of grasses of the present collection, received by me, there are thirty-five species new to Mr. Pringle's *Plantæ Mexicanæ*, and among these twelve are probably new species or varieties.

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Is the strawberry poisonous? *

The editorial in the November number of the GAZETTE in regard to plant poisoning leads me to make the present record of an interesting case which has come under my personal observation. A friend and neighbor, a gentleman now advanced in years, is so afflicted by the fresh fruits of the common strawberry that he is unable even to go into a room where they are without suffering serious consequences. As a boy, he was accustomed to the use of strawberries without apparent injury; but when about fourteen years of age he was taken violently and suddenly ill, accompanied by an irritating cutaneous rash, from eating moderately of field strawberries. The attack was so sudden and severe that he had to be carried from the field to the house. From this time to the present, a period of some sixty years, he has been unable to eat even a single strawberry without causing a more or less severe recurrence of the difficulty. On one occasion, some ten years after the first attack, hoping that he might have outgrown the trouble, he indulged in eating a few berries at a tea party, but was taken ill so suddenly that he was obliged to leave the table and retire to his room, where he was sick in bed for a day or two afterward. The first symptom of an attack is the appearance of the burning and itching cutaneous rash, which always begins behind the ears and spreads rapidly over the body; in the instance last mentioned, covering the whole body within an hour. Of course, he has long since learned to avoid strawberries as he would a dangerous plague; but he is so susceptible to the poisonous influence that the mere passing along the walk near a fruit stand where strawberries are exposed for sale is sufficient to cause a slight development of the cutaneous rash.

* Dr. White of Harvard Medical School writes me (Feb. '89) that he treats several such cases every year, — see letters, in file.

The only other case of the kind which I have ever heard of, and the only one known to the gentleman whose case is recorded above, is that of a distant relative of his, who is afflicted in a similar way. On one occasion, when visiting some friends who thought his dread of strawberries was largely or wholly a matter of the imagination, the hostess prepared some strawberry shrub, which was so disguised with other flavors as to conceal the real nature of the beverage. Of this he drank a moderate amount without knowing what it was; but he was soon taken with the worst symptoms of strawberry poisoning, his illness speedily becoming so serious that his life for a time was despaired of.

The two cases here recorded appear to be essentially the same, so far as the effects of the strawberry poisoning are concerned, the only important difference being that the susceptibility to the poison was not developed in the first case until the person in question was fourteen years of age, while in the other it seems to have been congenital.

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A. N. PRENTISS.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The Prothallium of Equisetum.¹

In this monograph Dr. Buchtien gives, in the first ten pages, a very full history of the special studies of Equisetum, from Dillenius in 1717 to Sadebeck in 1879. Almost all the earlier observers, as is well known, failed to understand the relations of the reproductive parts, and all the later ones have been troubled by inability to cultivate the prothallia. Buchtien gives a detailed description of his methods of culture. The key to his success seems to be in complete sterilization, by well-known methods, of the substrata used for cultures. The remainder of the paper describes fully the spore, its germination, development of the prothallium and its trichomes, the development of the spermatozoids and the formation of the young plantlet (asexual stage). Into the details of this developmental history we have not space to enter. The paper is a model of completeness and logical arrangement, and is an important one for laboratory libraries.

Muscologia Gallica.²

This important work has reached its sixth part, which almost completes the genus Orthotrichum. This part and a portion of the preceding and following, embracing all European species of the genus Orthotrichum, has been specially elaborated by Dr. Venturi. He shows a commendable recognition of the variability of the species of this genus, and many nominal species are reduced. Dr. Venturi's work is not only of

¹ Entwicklungsgeschichte des Prothallium von Equisetum. Von Dr. Otto Buchtien. (Bibliotheca botanica, heft 8) 4°, pp. 49, plates vi. Cassel: Theodor Fischer, 1887. Price, 10 marks.

² Muscologia Gallica, descriptions et figures des Mousses de France et des contrées voisines. By Th. Husnot. 6e livraison. Royal 8°, pp. 161-192, plates xlv-lil. Published by the author, Cahen, par Athis, Orne, France. Each livraison, 5 francs.